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OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Letter dated 17 August 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the nine South Pacific Forum countries that are also Members of the United Nations, namely: Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, I have the honour to request that the attached document, the Final Communiqué of the Twenty-third South Pacific Forum, held at Honiara, Solomon Islands, on 8 and 9 July 1992 (see annex), be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 15 (a), 18, 32, 44, 60, 62, 71, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97 and 102 of the provisional agenda. 1/

(Signed) Bernard BATA'ANISIA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

1/ The communiqué has been reproduced as received. The designations employed do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities.

ANNEX SPFS(92)18

TWENTY-THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

Honiara, Solomon Islands

8 - 9 July 1992

FORUM COMMUNIQUE

The Twenty-Third South Pacific Forum was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 8 - 9 July 1992, and was attended by Heads of Government of Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. Kiribati was represented by its Kauoman ni Beretitenti and Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Papua New Guinea by its Minister of Labour and Employment, and the Republic of Marshall Islands by its Minister of Foreign Affairs.

2. The Forum congratulated the people and Government of the Solomon Islands on their Fourteenth Independence Anniversary and acknowledged the generous hospitality provided to all delegations to the Forum.

3. The Forum considered the following key issues:

- follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED);
- economic and trade concerns;
- the special needs of the smaller island states;
- the importance of enhancing linkages with the broader Asia-Pacific Region;
- a Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation;
- the Niue Treaty on Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement;
- the region's concerns on nuclear testing and hazardous materials;
- indigenous peoples; and
- the state of Pacific children.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4. The Forum stressed that development undertaken in the region must be sustainable. Sound environmental practices constitute an integral part of the development process and all activities pursued in the region must be both economically and ecologically sound. The region remains extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and high population growth and is amongst the most seriously threatened by environmental degradation. A number of specific issues relating to sustainable development were reviewed.

ENVIRONMENT

Follow-up to UNCED

5. Since its inception in 1971, the Forum has consistently accorded high priority to environmental issues. In addition to its longstanding concerns about the regional environmental impact of nuclear testing, the Forum discussed measures to control pollution in the South Pacific in 1972, addressed environmental conservation in the Pacific in 1976 and adopted a resolution on regional environmental management (which contained an acknowledgement of regional biodiversity) in 1977. In 1979, the Forum strongly condemned any move to use the Pacific as a dumping ground for nuclear waste, and in 1988 the Forum expressed concern about climatic changes in the South Pacific and their potential for serious social and economic disruption. The Forum members participated actively in the UNCED process, with the support of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The Forum continues to accord a very high priority to environmental issues and to developing and implementing UNCED outcomes.

6. The Forum reaffirmed the importance of the outcomes of UNCED, including the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Declaration on Forest Principles. The Forum endorsed the concept of sustainable development, in which environmental protection constitutes an integral part of the development process. Since rapid population growth imposes significant strains on resources in the Pacific, the Forum expressed concern about the lack of attention given to this issue at UNCED.

- **Climate Change and Sea Level Rise**

7. The Forum reaffirmed that global warming and sea level rise are the most serious threats to the Pacific region and the survival of some island states. The Forum therefore welcomed the Framework Convention on Climate Change as an important first

step toward addressing the threat, and called for its prompt implementation. The Forum urged all states to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible. The Forum noted however that, according to the latest advice from the IPCC (the scientific body set up to advise the negotiations of the Convention) the commitments contained in the Framework Convention would not be sufficient to arrest the threat of global warming. Therefore the Forum also urged the early commencement of negotiations of protocols to implement and elaborate the Convention, consistent with its objective of 'stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to a level which would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system' (Article 2). These protocols should address, in particular, the issue of targets and timetables for the reduction of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and give effect to the other elements of the Convention.

8. The Forum recognised the central role of renewable energy resources, including solar, wind and hydro energy and energy efficient technologies in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. The Forum therefore urged adoption of concrete measures in support of the rapid development and dissemination of such technologies by all nations.

9. The Forum noted the threat to fresh water resources in the South Pacific, particularly to coastal aquifers and small island ecosystems, and welcomed the recognition of their importance in Agenda 21. Recognising the potential adverse impacts of global warming and sea level rise on FICs, the Forum stressed the need for relevant research and conservation projects, such as its Sea Level Rise and Climate Monitoring Project.

10. The Forum welcomed the announcement by the Australian Government to provide A$1.3m to upgrade meteorological services in the region. This would support the Sea Level Rise and Climate Monitoring Project being funded by Australia in the region.

- **Biodiversity**

11. The Forum reaffirmed that the South Pacific is one of the world's most biologically diverse regions, in terms of terrestrial ecosystems, lagoons, coral reefs and deep sea environments. The Forum welcomed the Convention on Biological Diversity, and called for its universal signature and ratification.

12. The Forum welcomed the announcement by the Government of Australia to provide A$5 million for the development of a region wide biodiversity conservation and management project.

- **Oceans and Fisheries**

13. The Forum endorsed the Agenda 21 Chapter on Living Marine Resources, particularly the proposed UN Inter-Governmental Conference to address the straddling fish stocks and highly migratory species provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Forum encouraged strong participation by FICs in the Inter-Governmental Conference and meetings leading up to that Conference. The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to the cessation of driftnet fishing. It fully supported the UNGA Resolution 46/215, which will end high seas driftnet fishing globally by 31 October 1992. It called on all eligible countries to ratify the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific or its protocols. The Forum considered that a global mechanism for protecting oceans from land based sources of pollution should receive high priority by the international community.

- **Ozone Depletion**

14. In respect of ozone depletion, the Forum noted that tropical regions are particularly vulnerable to ozone depletion because the tropical ozone layer is naturally thin. The Forum emphasised that there are strong environmental and economic incentives for all member countries to ratify the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol before January 1993.

- **Toxic and Hazardous Wastes**

15. The Forum noted that waste management and disposal, including toxic and hazardous wastes, remained a problem for the region. The Forum noted with concern the focus in Agenda 21 on waste management and disposal, at the expense of waste reduction at the source. The Forum welcomed the proposal for a regional convention on the control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and agreed that it be forwarded to SPREP for technical evaluation and comment.

- **Environmental Education and Public Awareness**

16. The Forum agreed that support for environmental education is essential, for example, to develop appropriate curricula for education and in-service training of development and economic planners in the area of resource and environmental economies and integrated island and coastal zone management.

- **Institutional Arrangements**

17. The Forum supported UNCED's call for international organisations to provide assistance for the development and implementation of Agenda 21. It noted the need for commitment of financial resources and technology transfer from developed countries if the goals of UNCED were to be achieved. It welcomed the recognition by UNCED of the particular needs of small island countries, and in this regard endorsed the continuing operation of AOSIS in the context of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. It also welcomed UNCED's call for a series of meetings and conferences on the sustainable development of small island countries. The Forum welcomed and fully supported the offer made by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands during UNCED for the Cook Islands to host in 1993 the first Global Conference for Small Island States to discuss in detail sustainable development and its implications. It endorsed UNCED's call for the establishment of a Commission on Sustainable Development to oversee the implementation of Agenda 21, and agreed to work to ensure that the interests of FICs are appropriately reflected in its establishment and operations.

18. The Forum strongly endorsed the role of SPREP as the region's principal environmental organisation, and expressed its appreciation for SPREP's coordination of the region's input into UNCED. It agreed that this collective and coordinated regional approach should be continued in other international fora to ensure recognition and protection of the region's interests in pursuit of solutions to global environmental problems.

Nuclear Testing

19. The decision of the Government of France to suspend nuclear testing in 1992 was warmly welcomed. Forum countries have consistently called on France to cease its nuclear testing in the Pacific region and commended French recognition of the sensitivities of Forum members on this issue. Indefinite extension of the French cessation of nuclear tests will contribute significantly to improving further the relations between France and the countries of the Pacific. Forum Leaders have sent an urgent letter to the President of the French Republic, urging him to suspend French nuclear testing indefinitely.

20. The Forum expressed the strong hope that this would lead to the permanent cessation of nuclear testing in the South Pacific, which would remove once and for all a major stumbling block in the relations between the countries of the region and France. Any resumption of nuclear testing would clearly disappoint Forum members and set-back the current positive trend in improved relations between France and the Forum.

21. The Forum also expressed the wish for continued monitoring in the area of the nuclear test sites to assess the nuclear contamination, if any, to the marine environment caused by past nuclear testing.

22. The Forum urged other nuclear weapon states to follow the lead given by France and Russia by suspending nuclear testing with a view to banning all nuclear testing in all environments for all time. In this regard the Forum sent strong messages to the world's nuclear powers urging the indefinite suspension of nuclear testing.

Nuclear Liability

23. The Forum recognised the possibility of nuclear damage to the South Pacific from the past, present and future activities, including nuclear testing, nuclear dumping, and the sea transport of plutonium. It noted the absence of effective international rules for nuclear liability, but recalled the ongoing deliberations by the Standing Committee on Nuclear Liability within the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Forum expressed the desire that its members participate actively in the negotiations; and it expressed strong support for the establishment of a comprehensive and all embracing international legal regime on liability for nuclear damage.

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone

24. The Forum noted and welcomed the changed global environment and the positive disarmament initiatives undertaken recently by nuclear weapon states. In view of these developments, the Forum reiterated its call for those nuclear weapon states who have not acceded to the Protocols to do so as soon as possible.

French accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

25. The Forum is greatly encouraged by France's strong support for nuclear non-proliferation. The Forum particularly welcomed French accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and its decision as a nuclear supplier country, to require states who wish to purchase nuclear materials and technology to place all their existing and future nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Significantly, that policy is consistent with the nuclear supply principles embodied in the Treaty of Rarotonga (Article IV).

Ocean Dumping of Radioactive and Other Wastes

26. The Forum welcomed the decision of the Conference of the Parties of the London Dumping Convention to place the issue of an Amendment Conference on the agenda of its 1992 meeting. The Forum noted that the global moratorium on radioactive waste dumping at sea could be drawing to an end, and reiterated its support for the objectives of the amendment proposed by Nauru and Kiribati to permanently prohibit the dumping of radioactive wastes at sea. The Forum encouraged all of its members to participate in the Conference of the Parties, because the decisions taken could be decisive for the future of the South Pacific Region.

Plutonium Shipments

27. Forum Leaders noted that the Japanese Government plans from later this year to ship plutonium from Europe to Japan and that such shipments would transit through the Pacific region. They noted the risks inherent in such shipments from surface accidents and from possible loss of cargo at sea. They expressed their concern that the shipments be made in accordance with the highest international safety and security standards and in a manner which satisfactorily addresses all possible contingencies. The Forum urged Japan to consult fully with Forum countries regarding the proposed shipments.

Chemical Weapons

28. The Forum reaffirmed its abhorrence of chemical weapons and the need to rid them from the world through the early conclusion of a global convention banning for all time their development, production, stockpiling and use.

29. The Forum noted that after 20 years of negotiations in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD), a draft final text of a Chemical Weapons Convention had been tabled in the CD on 22 June 1992 by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. The Forum urged countries involved in the CD negotiations to demonstrate their commitment to a chemical weapons free world by reaching agreement on a balanced and comprehensive Convention this year.

30. With regard to the region's continuing concern about the Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Destruction System, the Forum again stressed that one of the most important issues remained that of ensuring that it closes down permanently in line with United States' assurances, when the current programme of weapons destruction is completed. The Forum noted the report of the scientific mission to Johnston Atoll and stated that it would continue to monitor the JACADS programme.

ECONOMICS AND TRADE

31. The Forum stressed the importance for member governments to recognise the impact of global macro-economic trends on their open economies and their susceptibility to external change. It again stressed the importance of putting in place effective domestic economic policies, with recognition of the vital role that an effective private sector should play in ensuring economic growth. A sound investment strategy was vital for ensuring the maximum development of local resources and for encouraging foreign investment into Forum Countries. The Forum noted the critical need to maintain substantial resource flows to Forum Island Countries.

32. Of critical importance to the region was the development of its people. In this regard, the strengthening of educational opportunities particularly vocational and post-secondary education is critical.

33. It noted with appreciation the development assistance initiatives outlined by the Government of Fiji in providing access to their educational facilities through a scholarship scheme together with the sharing of their expertise, with other Forum Island Countries. The Forum was pleased to note that both Australia and New Zealand indicated they would continue to give priority to the South Pacific in their aid programmes.

34. The Forum welcomed the initiative announced by Fiji to establish a non reciprocal SPARTECA-like trade agreement for the other Forum Island Countries, aimed at providing assistance to their economies through facilitating exports.

35. The Forum stated that while many issues needed action at the national level, there was a vital role for regional action, in support of national objectives. It reiterated that regional development activity was best addressed through the application of a regional development strategy for the Forum Island Countries which is being developed by the Forum Secretariat. This would encourage the optimal use of resources directed to the areas most in need. The Forum noted the importance of dialogue and consultation in the development of the strategy, particularly with member governments and in cooperation with the South Pacific Organisations Coordinating Committee and the region's partners.

36. To ensure the maximum result from the use of resources, clear and coordinated communication with the region's partners in development is also essential. The development of the regional strategy and annual Pacific Island Countries/Development Partners consultations will assist in realising this aim.

37. The Forum reiterated the importance of a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round as a means for promoting increased world trade and through that economic growth. The Forum remained concerned that a successful conclusion to the Round this year was by no means assured with differences yet to be resolved between the United States and the European Community.

38. The Forum in seeking a solution to this impasse made an urgent plea to the Leaders of the G7 industrialised countries meeting in Munich. It noted that sustainable development so recently spoken of at the UNCED Earth Summit in Rio would only be realised in full if developing countries, and indeed all countries in the world, were able to benefit from responsible management of their resources through more open and fairer trading conditions. The Forum agreed that no single action by G7 industrialised countries would do more for sustainable economic development in the world than a substantive and trade enhancing outcome to the Uruguay Round.

- **Linkages with the Asia/Pacific Region**

39. The Forum stressed the critical importance of establishing more effective international links. It intended to give particular priority to the links with the countries of the Asia/Pacific Rim. The Forum noted the continuing development of the Joint Commercial Commission with the USA, allowing for the promotion of private sector links between the South Pacific and US investors. It requested the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands to continue overviewing the development of this programme in conjunction with the Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program and the JCC Executive Secretary/Consultant. The Forum's efforts to establish a more systematic contact with Taiwan is also relevant in the context of improving linkages with the Asia/Pacific region. Attention will also be directed to greater but focussed participation in APEC and PECC, with greater emphasis also given to strengthening the economic relationship with ASEAN.

SMALLER ISLAND STATES

40. The Forum continued to recognise the special development problems faced by and the requirements of the Smaller Island States of the Forum. It noted the commitment of the Smaller Island States to greater self reliance and their national and collective efforts to improve the quality of the living standards of their people.

41. The Forum directed the Secretariat to play a more active role in the coordination of development programmes and the mobilisation of resources to meet the special needs of the Smaller Island States. It further agreed that programmes to assist the Smaller

Island States would be developed in the context of the Forum's own consideration of the region's priorities and are an integral part of the Forum's activities.

42. The Forum urged all other regional organisations to pay greater attention to the special needs of the Smaller Island States of the Forum in their respective programmes. It reaffirmed its call to the region's major development partners, including the multilateral institutions, to appropriately recognise the special development problems faced by and the requirements of the Smaller Island States of the Forum and to respond, wherever possible with assistance which would promote their efforts toward self reliance and sustainability.

FISHERIES

43. The Forum noted the vital importance of effective regional arrangements for dealing with Distant Water Fishing Nations for the benefit of the region as a whole. The Forum warmly welcomed the extension of the multilateral treaty on fisheries with the United States of America which was a landmark for fisheries cooperation in the region. It urged other Distant Fishing Water Nations to enter into negotiations with the Forum Fisheries Agency on similar multilateral arrangements.

44. The Forum also stressed the importance of consistent application of the agreed minimum terms and conditions of access in any bilateral agreements with Distant Fishing Water Nations. It also agreed that governments should, in accordance with particular national circumstances, give appropriate priority to ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention.

45. The Forum confirmed that the effective provision of maritime surveillance was important in enforcing fisheries regulations and that attention should be given to the flexibility and coordination of surveillance flights. It agreed that a regional approach should be made to France to be involved in surveillance flights in the region, and noted the value of the continuing development of the Maritime Surveillance Communication Network.

Niue Treaty on Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement

46. The Forum having recognised the urgent need for closer cooperation amongst Forum members to protect their fisheries noted the work completed on a treaty on reciprocal and joint surveillance and enforcement at the 22nd Forum Fisheries Committee meeting in Niue in May 1992. It confirmed support for the Niue Treaty on

Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region. Forum members in a position to do so signed the Treaty.

REGIONAL SECURITY

47. The Forum recognised the implications for the region of the rapid and far reaching changes in the global political and economic scene. It noted the introduction of some longer term uncertainties as a product of the end of the Cold War. The Forum considered that the uncertainties can be reduced by the strengthening of mechanisms to increase the exchange of information within the region and dialogue.

Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation

48. The Forum considered major issues relating to regional cooperation in the law enforcement field and agreed to a Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation which identifies priorities and establishes a framework within which further cooperation can be pursued. The Declaration is attached to the Communique.

NEW CALEDONIA

49. The Forum again noted the positive measures being pursued in New Caledonia by the French authorities, in cooperation with all sectors of the population, to promote equitable political, economic and social development in the territory, in order to provide a framework for its peaceful evolution to self-determination. The Forum was encouraged by the continuing progress made in implementation of the Matignon Accords and reiterated its full support for the processes being conducted under the Accords. The Forum noted that the forthcoming mid-term review of the Accords would be important in ensuring that progress was maintained towards the decolonisation of the territory.

50. The Forum hoped that the French authorities and others would continue to expand their assistance for education and training opportunities for the Kanak population, in order to enable all New Caledonians to exercise their right of self-determination under the best possible conditions. Besides equitable economic and social development, transparency in preparation of the electoral rolls and continued dialogue among all parties in New Caledonia were important in ensuring an act of self-determination consistent with the principles and practices of the United Nations, in which all options, including independence, were open, and which would safeguard the rights of the indigenous Kanaks and of all other New Caledonians. The Forum reiterated their hope that the French authorities would facilitate regular visits to New Caledonia by visiting missions from the United Nations.

51. The Forum welcomed the increasing contacts between New Caledonia and the countries of the Forum, including through greater participation of representatives of the territory in technical committees, workshops and seminars organised by the Secretariat. It would continue to encourage these links. The Forum believed that New Caledonia was an integral part of the South Pacific region, and that strengthening cooperation between Forum members and New Caledonia was a positive contribution towards the process of political and economic rebalancing in the territory. It appreciated the constructive attitude being taken by all involved, including the Government of France, to facilitate further development of these links.

52. In this connection, the Forum noted that officials had finalised guidelines and procedures for a Kanak Training Fund to be administered by the Secretariat, and expressed appreciation to Papua New Guinea for its contribution of K100,000 which was handed over at the Twenty-Third Forum to launch the Fund. The Forum also agreed that informal contacts with FLNKS and other political groups from New Caledonia during the annual Forum meeting were useful and would be continued.

53. The Forum agreed that its Ministerial Committee on New Caledonia had a continuing role to play in liaison between the Forum and the territory, and in ensuring that the Forum could maintain active and vigilant observation of developments, including work towards the formulation of questions to be asked during the referendum in 1998. The Committee's work would be particularly valuable after the mid-term review of the Accords. The Forum hoped that the French and territorial authorities would continue to facilitate the work of the Committee.

RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN/REPUBLIC OF CHINA

54. The Forum agreed that the importance of Taiwan/Republic of China as an economic presence in the region justified some form of formal consultative arrangement with those Forum countries which wish to participate. Forum countries propose to institute, therefore, a "Taiwan/Republic of China-Forum Countries Dialogue". This will take place at the same venue as the Forum, but be separate from the existing post-Forum Dialogue. Participating countries would do so in their own right and would not represent the Forum as a whole.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

55. The Forum noted that 1993 had been declared by the United Nations as the International Year for Indigenous Peoples of the World. It recognised the importance of these issues to the region and endorsed the holding of a regional conference this year, to

consider the broader concerns such as indigenous rights; the protection and preservation of culture including cultural property; approaches to resource and environmental management; and the application of customary laws. These regional concerns could then be encompassed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and also be incorporated into considerations at the United Nations on a possible follow-up programme of action within the region.

FORUM COUNTRY INITIATIVES

Coastal Protection

56. Heads of Government noted the need for effective coastal protection in the region and requested the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) together to investigate various coastal protection systems being developed or that are already in place that might be beneficial throughout the region, to convene jointly such meetings of experts as may be necessary for that purpose, and to report back to Forum countries as soon as possible.

UN Security Council Candidacy of New Zealand

57. The Forum reaffirmed its support for the candidacy of New Zealand for the United Nations Security Council for a two year term in 1993-94.

STATE OF PACIFIC CHILDREN

58. The Forum recognised its responsibility to ensure that children are able to grow and develop to their full potential and to be supportive of family and communities in their efforts to nurture and guide their children. During periods of economic austerity, individual governments are encouraged to protect children's well-being by continuing adequate support for essential health and education services for children, in particular, primary health care and education.

59. The Forum endorsed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and encouraged Governments yet to sign the Declaration to do so and take action for early ratification by their Governments of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

60. It noted the need to establish and/or strengthen mechanisms for monitoring the well-being of children and families. Such data should be integrated into the regular development indicators used to assess the progress of a nation.

61. Forum members noted the need to analyse the situation of their own children and develop National Programmes of Action which address the priority issues and opportunities for children in their country. It recognised the importance of forging a broad coalition of government, non-government, community and individual initiatives on behalf of children and that the impact of economic development projects on children and families be fully considered.

62. The Forum urged regional organisations to take special note of the needs of Pacific children and take opportunities to support national initiatives to enhance the well-being of children.

63. The Forum suggested that the South Pacific Conference consider adopting "Pacific Children" as the theme of the 1993 South Pacific Conference.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

64. The Forum expressed satisfaction with the continuing processes within the Forum Secretariat for upgrading its management and planning to ensure priorities and the rationale for activities were understood and accepted. The present work would improve transparency and accountability and ensure the integration of systems and operations.

65. The Forum acknowledged the role of the South Pacific Organisations Coordinating Committee (SPOCC) in improving coordination and cooperation between regional organisations over the last twelve months. The Forum agreed to the Tourism Council of the South Pacific becoming a member of the Committee.

66. The Forum agreed to a new Logo to be used by the Forum and its Secretariat.

REPORTS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

67. The Forum received with appreciation and adopted, where appropriate, annual reports of the:

(1) Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency
(2) Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program
(3) Director of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
(4) Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific
(5) Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat
(6) Director of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
(7) Director of the Tourism Council of the South Pacific

RECOGNITION TO THE PREMIER OF NIUE

68. The Forum in recognition that the Twenty-Third Forum meeting would be the last for Sir Robert Rex, KBE, CMG, OBE, Premier of Niue, expressed appreciation for the valuable contribution he had made to the Forum and regional cooperation over the years.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

69. The Forum reaffirmed its appreciation and acceptance of the kind offer of Nauru to host the 24th South Pacific Forum. The date for the Forum will be finalised by Nauru in consultation with the Secretariat.

DECLARATION BY THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM ON LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

Forum Leaders recalled the concerns they had expressed at the 1991 Forum about the possible threat to the region from criminal activities, and their conclusion that scope existed to strengthen effective law enforcement cooperation in the region. An adverse law enforcement environment could threaten the sovereignty, security and economic integrity of Forum members and jeopardise economic and social development. The threats to the stability of regional law enforcement were complex and sophisticated, and the potential impact of transnational crime was a matter for increasing concern to regional states and enforcement agencies. The Forum agreed that there was a need for a more comprehensive, integrated and collaborative approach to counter these threats.

2. The Forum considered that law enforcement cooperation should therefore remain an important focus for the region. The scale of criminal activity affecting the region could expand. Forum Leaders noted that balanced economic and social development, the primary goal of all the countries of the region, could not be achieved without the assurance of safety and security. Early action to strengthen the existing framework to tackle potential law enforcement problems should therefore be taken.

3. Forum Leaders noted in this regard the important work already being carried out on specialist aspects of law enforcement by other regional bodies to which Forum members belong, such as the Pacific Islands Law Officers Meeting (PILOM), the Customs Heads of Administration Regional Meeting (CHARM), and the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (SPCPC). The Forum Secretariat should not duplicate the activities of such agencies. Forum Leaders considered, however, that law enforcement problems faced by the region were important and inter-related. Networking, to provide maximum access to existing opportunities, was very important. The Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) could coordinate and disseminate information which would establish a framework for increasing contacts amongst specialist agencies and provide advice to Forum Leaders on law enforcement issues. Forum Leaders directed the FRSC to meet once a year before the Forum Officials Committee (FOC) to review and advise on programme priorities, institutional linkages, and resource needs in the area of law enforcement cooperation and information exchange on regional and international security issues.

4. The Forum noted that certain areas of law enforcement had emerged as particularly important to members. These included necessary legislation on extradition, proceeds of crime (assets forfeiture), mutual criminal assistance, and other aspects of

economic crime. In addition, further legislation might be necessary in some areas concerning drug issues. Training issues were also seen as of vital importance. The FRSC should, while giving due regard to the important role played by other regional organisations, place priority on these areas in its continuing work.

5. Forum Leaders noted that lack of resources was a critical constraint in all areas of regional law enforcement. This would require a strategic approach with clear weighing up of competing priorities, including those in other sectors, and the setting of realistic objectives. Forum Leaders directed that the FRSC, in reporting to the Forum, should provide regular advice on the resource implications of its activities, including those for the Forum Secretariat. The Forum hoped that the region's international partners would recognise the newly emerging needs in the law enforcement area, and agreed that appropriate partners should be approached for assistance.

Legal Issues

6. The Forum noted the priority that members had given to putting into place satisfactory legislative arrangements in extradition, mutual assistance in criminal matters, and forfeiture of the proceeds of crime. It appreciated the key role played by PILOM in coordinating regional concerns, and the growing cooperation between PILOM and the Forum Secretariat. The Forum urged member governments to take action as soon as possible on the priorities identified, although it recognised that exact timetables would naturally depend on the national circumstances of individual members.

Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters

7. The Forum recognised that the establishment of a framework of Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between themselves would enhance cooperation between their Courts, prosecution authorities and law enforcement agencies. Forum members therefore strongly urged member governments to adopt procedures to assist one another in identifying persons, in searching for and seizing evidence, and in arranging for witnesses to give evidence either in their own country or in the country in which the trial takes place.

Forfeiture of the Proceeds of Crime

8. The Forum recognised that large profits from organised crime provide both an incentive to criminal activity together with the capital to develop criminal organisations large enough to operate on an international scale. The Forum accepted the need to strengthen national and international legal provisions to enable the proceeds and

instrumentalities of crime to be traced, frozen and seized, and acknowledged the need to regulate banking and other financial services to reduce the possible manipulation of these services to 'launder' the proceeds of crime. The Forum recognised that bank secrecy laws can be used as a shield for the laundering of criminal profits and determined that it should not be permitted to obstruct the operation of mutual assistance arrangements. The Forum strongly urged member governments to adopt provisions to construct a framework for action by assisting one another in locating the proceeds of crime, in taking forfeiture proceedings and by enforcing confiscation orders made in other countries to the extent consistent with their laws. The Forum also noted the importance, in this respect, of the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Extradition

9. The Forum recognised that, while most members have Extradition Acts which reflect the pre-1986 text of the London Scheme for the Rendition of Fugitive Offenders, there was still a need to review extradition arrangements within the region. The Forum agreed that members should review their extradition legislation and, if required, take steps to introduce and bring into force legislation based on the United Nations Model Treaty on Extradition or on the current London Scheme for the Rendition of Fugitive Offenders within the Commonwealth.

Financial Action Task Force

10. The Forum accepted the assessment of the Secretariat's Law Enforcement Needs Assessment Study that there is a risk the South Pacific region may be targetted for money laundering activities as other regions become progressively less attractive for such activities. The Forum noted that significant international efforts were being taken to counter money laundering, in particular by the Group of Seven's Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Many FATF recommendations were relevant to the law enforcement needs and circumstances of South Pacific region, particularly those on strengthening cooperative measures on the forfeiture of proceeds of crime. The Forum recommended that Forum members consider which FATF recommendations are applicable to their individual circumstances, and where applicable introduce and bring into force legislation to implement the relevant FATF recommendations.

Customs Issues

11. The Forum welcomed CHARM's intention to work towards a closer association with the Forum, in light of the importance of Customs agencies to members in revenue

collection and law enforcement. While the determination of ongoing priorities in regional customs assistance was for CHARM, the Forum agreed in principle to the establishment of a Customs support unit within the Forum Secretariat. Resources and accountability implications should be clearly established by officials in approving a specific proposal. The Forum also endorsed the efforts of CHARM to provide for FIC participation in the Customs Cooperation Council. The Forum invited CHARM to provide an annual report to the Forum via the FRSC.

Police Issues

12. The Forum acknowledged the vital role played by the SPCPC in regional law enforcement issues, and the need to enhance cooperation with the SPCPC. It invited the SPCPC to report annually to the Forum, through the FRSC, on significant issues facing members. The Forum noted in particular that the SPCPC had initiated a training needs assessment and felt that, while the specialist needs of police forces were primarily for the SPCPC and national governments to address, there could be room to facilitate police training through the Forum framework.

Drugs Issues

13. The Forum expressed its continuing concerns over the grave social consequences of drug abuse and the illegal traffic in narcotic drugs. It recognised the need for cooperation in international efforts to address the problems, and observed that the recommendations adopted in the area of mutual criminal assistance would go some considerable way to assist. The Forum felt that the primary role in cooperation at the operational level to combat the drug problem lay with other organisations, in particular Customs and Police, and directed the Forum Secretariat to assist the efforts of other bodies to the fullest possible extent. Forum members agreed to accord priority to ratifying and implementing the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Training

14. The Forum recognised that proper training of personnel was essential in all areas of law enforcement, and that in many instances current arrangements and resources were inadequate. It noted the efforts being made by specialist bodies such as SPCPC, PILOM and CHARM to address the problems in their areas. The Forum considered that in general training needs were best addressed as appropriate by the specialist bodies which could properly assess specialist needs. Training needs covered too many areas to be susceptible to one solution. There might nonetheless in the Forum's view be a role

for a central training clearing house to connect donors and specialist agencies in areas of need. The Forum directed the FRSC to examine this possibility further.

Other Issues

15. The Forum recognised that environmental issues, of fundamental importance to the region, raised significant law enforcement concerns. Efforts to implement laws on waste dumping, driftnet fishing, oil spills and other pollution emergencies, and wildlife smuggling were examples. The Forum acknowledged SPREP's primary role in all regional environmental matters, and welcomed its increasing capacity. It invited SPREP to be involved in the work of the FRSC on the environmental aspects of the region's law enforcement concerns.

16. The Forum recognised terrorism as a threat to the political and economic security of the region, and noted the various international conventions in the field. It identified areas of possible cooperation amongst Forum governments, particularly in intelligence gathering, training of personnel and joint exercises in dealing with serious incidents. While recognising the primary role of other networks, particularly police, in addressing this area, the Forum agreed that Forum programmes, particularly in the civil aviation area, should continue to take account of terrorism concerns.

17. The Forum welcomed the increasing capacity of the FFA in maritime surveillance, which embodied the capacity of countries to manage their fisheries resources and enforce sovereignty. It recognised the need for coordination of maritime surveillance activities, and asked the FFA to remain involved with the work of the FRSC on the law enforcement aspects of fisheries resource management. In particular, the Forum endorsed the benefits of the regional maritime surveillance communication network, and directed that the FFA should explore the possibilities of further interfacing this with other regional communication networks. The Forum noted that implementation of the Treaty on cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific would significantly enhance the fisheries resource management capability of Forum member countries. The Forum requested the Forum Secretariat to continue to play an active role in addressing maritime and civil aviation legal issues.

18. The Forum noted the importance of taxation issues for the development of the economies of the region. It felt that existing organisations with South Pacific membership, such as the Commonwealth Association of Taxation Administrators and the Pacific Association of Taxation Administrators, could provide useful advice on such issues but that further study in this field might be undertaken with a view to identifying the more specific needs of FICs.

19. The Forum considered the problems faced by Prison administrators throughout the region. The special circumstances of island countries with small prison populations were often not addressed adequately in existing bodies to promote cooperation in this area in the wider Asia/Pacific region. Forum Leaders endorsed the concept of a meeting of Heads of regional prison services.

20. The Forum agreed on the importance of indigenous issues in its member countries. It was stressed that an understanding of indigenous issues, in particular a knowledge of customary laws, was essential to the development and security of the region.